

# THE TURKISH JEANNE D'ARC

## An Armenian Picture of Remarkable Halide Edib Hanoum

Woodstock, N. Y., Sept. 11, 1922.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

In an interesting editorial in THE SUNDAY TIMES you offered the suggestion that the world is blessed with a new heroine in the person of a Halide Ebid Hanoum as the Turkish Jeanne d'Arc. Born out of the darkness and moral chaos and fled the Turkish harem, such a heroine is of great public interest, therefore, I am volunteering a few supplementary facts.

As a student in Constantinople College some years ago I had the privilege of closely associating as a fellow-student with the two sisters of Halide Edib Hanoum, Belkis Edib and Nigyar Edib Hanoum, who were my seniors in class, and I happen to be somewhat familiar in person with Halide Hanoum herself and also by force of circumstance with that curious enigma called Turkish psychology and politics. For Halide herself, despite her renowned feminism, is the most typical of harem products.

The three sisters, Halide, Belkis and Nigyar were the daughters of the three separate wives of their father, Edib Bey, who, nevertheless, being one of the enlightened Turks of his time, sent his daughters to an American college to teach them English. When the negro eunuchs called at week-ends to escort the daughters home they went by separate routes each to her own mother's konak maintained by their father for his different wives. We knew of the existence of three only because of these three daughters from three mothers. There might have been more of which the daughters did not speak, but the fact of the three mothers was only referred to by them.

It was true that Halide Hanoum had been a serious student at Constantinople College. This was long before my days but I have heard of it from the college faculty. Her studiousness was specially noted because in her time no Turkish student could be induced to take her studies seriously. Most of them came there as a new and fashionable thing to do and passed their time mostly on the way to and from the harems. This they hailed as their new freedom from confinement. Halide displayed marked ability and unusual gifts. She was one of the first Turkish women to graduate from the American college. After her graduation she married a noted journalist, a man of high scholarship and education. She had two sons from this marriage, but her husband informed her of the coming of another wife into the Harem. Halide was the leader of the new generation who began to rebel against harem life and therefore asked a divorce.

It was at this stage that I knew her. She became a favorite in the American colony of Constantinople because of her apparent idealism and courage as leader in a new and rather delicate movement. She was frequently seen on the college campus and was present at all our entertainments. All of us Christian students of all races almost indiscriminately were at that time sincere admirers of her unusual talents and regarded her as the hope of the new Turkish womanhood which we all believed would eventually produce a better Turkish race and by reasons of our own national political interests we subscribed to her platform. However, every Christian student who saw her first was invariably disappointed in her appearance, which represented the most common type of the hot-house-flower puppets which adorn the Turkish harems. Slim, petite in stature, bleached auburn curls cleverly escaping from under her veil and Tcharshaf, blackened eyelashes, penciled eyebrows and painted lips. She seemed to us in utter contradiction of the new type of Turkish woman whose leader she was to be. However, her personality revealed itself out of her masked exterior when she spoke. She was a firebrand in speech and her natural eloquence and seeming earnestness won her many admirers.

At this period her political career had not begun. She saw her chance for fame and power, as every typical Turk instinctively does, with the beginning of the Armenian persecution, and she began her famous career during the "some two years she spent in and around Damascus." It seems strange that while this event in her career is noted in your editorial as an item of importance the character of her mission, which is necessarily of greater importance than the fact of her having spent some years in Damascus, is omitted.

It was these two years in Damascus that put Halide Edib Hanoum on her road to Angora and to her present heights of fame as being acclaimed the Turkish Jeanne d'Arc. During this time she became, because of her political opinions and of her stand on the Armenian massacres, the sole close associate of the triumvirate of dictators, Enver, Taltat and Jemal. Jemal Pasha, as Dictator of Syria and as the Supervisor General of the Armenian deportations, came to be known as the cruellest man on the triumvirate, and, in the words of one Turkish journalist, Ali Kemal Bey, he rose to eminence mainly because of his gifts for murder and pillage. Halide Edib Hanoum during this period became the official and chief aid of Jemal Pasha, and it was then that she spent "some two years in and around Damascus." It is here that her political history begins. She lived in the harem of Jemal Pasha during those two years in Aleppo and had charge of the vast numbers of Armenian orphans who were gathered from the Syrian deserts to Aleppo under the educational methods of Halide Hanoum. So this little woman who so often boasts of her American ideals of womanhood and of which her Western friends make so much, after calmly planning with her associate forms of human tortures for Armenian mothers and young women, undertook the task of making Turks of their orphaned children.

The Allies knew of her complicity in these crimes, and while her three associates escaped for their lives, she was allowed to return to Constantinople on account of her being "a woman." But eventually it was because of her past political history that she was exiled to the Island of Malta. From Malta Halide Hanoum escaped to Angora, and there married again her present husband and carried on with her new associates new

methods of persecution against the Christians of Asia Minor.

Is this the ideal of American education which we wish to impart to the new generation of Turkish women? I too have been the grateful recipient of American education in the Near East and in this country and caught something of the ideal of American college womanhood, but if I were ever to boast of it and to make a useful weapon of it on the road to fame and heroism it would not be in associating myself with the murderers of my race if we produced any such leaders.

This is the record of the Turkish Jeanne d'Arc in Damascus. Halide Hanoum is at present surrounded by great and powerful influence because of the natural interest and fascination of a woman and moreover a Turkish woman of her achievements, can rally around her. A few of the highest American officials in Constantinople have succumbed to her fascinations. Some of Halide Hanoum's friends have been urging her to take a trip to America to repudiate the Armenian massacres. Her friends would be wiser to advise her, however, not to attempt such a precarious journey, for under our American laws she cannot be admitted to this country for her record.

AGHAVNIE YEGHENIAN

### NORTHERN EPIRUS.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

I read, with sincere appreciation, your editorial "Macedonia and Thrace" in the issue of July 17. May I suggest here that there is another vital Balkan issue which will confront the Council of the League of Nations now deliberating in London? The question of Northern Epirus has been given very little space by the American press, although it involves perilous possibilities in the Adriatic.

On Jan. 13, 1920, the Supreme Council awarded that Province to Greece. On Nov. 5, 1921, the Ambassadorial Conference reversed that decision and awarded the Province to Albania, who, thanks to Italy's efforts, had been in possession of the Province since April, 1920. Greece has protested against the unwarranted reversal of the decision of the Supreme Council and has refused to recognize the validity of the Ambassadorial decree.

Meanwhile, the League of Nations had Albania sign, on Oct. 2, 1921, a declaration, engaging Albania to respect and protect the Greek schools and churches, the Greek clergy and teaching staff and the free use of the Greek Church and Greek language. The Albanians, however, have completely disregarded their pledges to the League. The 360 Greek schools, with a total attendance of 22,595 pupils, for a Greek population of 120,000, have been closed, and the 376 Greek churches confiscated. The 348 priests and the two Bishops have been exiled. The Greek language is forbidden under penalty of imprisonment, exile and even assassination. Greek Epirotes returning to their homes from America, even with American passports, are fined 500 lire-tas each if they are not furnished with a certificate either by the Albanian Vice Consul at New York or by the Albanian Union at Boston, both of which organizations demand of the Greek Epirotes to depose on oath that they are of Albanian nationality before issuing those certificates.

Lord Balfour suggested some time ago that the only solution to the problem of the protection of minorities under semi-civilized Governments, is to place these Governments under the mandate of some European power, which is amenable to the moral pressure of the League. Turks and Moslem Albanians pay no attention at all to world opinion—the only weapon at the command of the League of Nations. According to Lord Balfour's formula, Greece should be entrusted with the mandate over Northern Epirus and the League should undertake to supervise the liberal administration by Greece of the Albanian minority.

N. J. CASSAVETES,

Director of the Pan-Epirotic Union in America.

Philadelphia, July 20, 1922.

### PLIGHT OF THE FARMER.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

In recent editorials you express gratification that farmers have not gone on a strike and that bumper crops evidence their prosperity. The more wheat a farmer raises at less than 90 cents a bushel, corn at 50, potatoes at 40 and oats at 20 the poorer he is and the faster he approaches bankruptcy. These prices, already reached in parts of our land, are not offset by lower labor cost. Farm labor is still high, and, what is worse, utterly demoralized by the eight-hour day and the exorbitant wages of railroad, mine and factory unions, which the farmer in a large measure pays. It is also scarce, many laborers having quit the farm to swell the multitude of the city unemployed.

Few farmers are deceived by the tariff "protecting" farm products. We know we produce more than this country consumes; that we are dependent on foreign markets; that foreign nations have no money to pay debts or make purchases, and if their products cannot be accepted in exchange, which the tariff largely prohibits, we are doomed to see surplus crops stay here and continue to depress the market.

An investigation will show that farmers pay 9 per cent. for Government money loaned them; that, while they cannot get for a hide the price of skinning, they must pay \$1.10 per pound for the same hide when tanned; 5 to 6 cents they get for a beef and pay the butcher 35 to 40 for a roast; a plow point still costs four times its former price; their business is ruined by high freight rates necessary to pay exorbitant wages to railway unions; and grain, their main dependence, is the football of exchanges. Our union labor friends destroy millions of dollars of our perishable crops by their strikes without batting an eye, and now Congress, after a tariff to Cerberus, loads us down with billions for a bonus to mercenary troops and a ship subsidy.

The farmers of this country have the power to rule it. Is it not time that they took the reins of government entirely in their own hands?

SAMUEL B. WOODS,

Charlottesville, Va., Aug. 28, 1922.